1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
EH14 Sarakatsani EH14
Zagori
Greece EH1

2. THE SARAKATSANI OF ZAGORI

The community of Sarakatsan shepherds which I describe in this study numbers about 4,000 souls.[18] In summer they are found in Zagori, a mountainous district north-east of the town of Jannina on the western limits of the Pindus range in the province of Epirus. Here they graze their sheep and goats from May until the early days of November; or as they would calculate it, between the feast-days of St. George and St. Demetrius which mark their seasonal migrations between plain and mountain (and are celebrated according to the old Julian calendar, that is, on the 6th May and the 8th November by the new calendar). In each Zagori village with high grasslands there is a local gathering of Sarakatsan families which exploit the grazing land of the community and add to it a summer population of 100–300 men, women, and children. Since 1938 the majority of these shepherd families have enjoyed the same citizenship and grazing rights as the sedentary villagers of Zagori from whom previously they had to rent their pastures. There are 152,000 sheep and goats in the Zagori of which 85,000 sheep and 13,000 goats belong to the Sarakatsani.[19] Although the eastern villages of the district are Koutsovlach in speech and sentiment very few of their inhabitants are, any longer, transhumant shepherds, and the pastures of these villages are used by the Sarakatsani, who indeed occupy almost all the higher pastures of the district, grazing their flocks on the lands of 30 of the 43 villages which today constitute Zagori; the remaining villages are low lying (where it is easier to keep animals throughout the year), or they are without extensive areas of grass.

In the winter the community is more widely dispersed. The Sarakatsani move down from the mountains to the coastal plains and valleys over an area which extends from the Albanian frontier as far south as the towns of Arta and Preveza and even beyond.

[18] There are no census details for the Sarakatsani as such. And police restriction on my movements prevented me from carrying out a complete survey of all the sheep villages in Zagori. However, on the basis of my own incomplete figures and information supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture for pastoralism in Zagori generally, this figure is most unlikely to be far from the truth.

[19] Thus there are 24·5 sheep and goats per head of population among the Zagori Sarakatsani.

16 /17 cont./
123 published data. (1)
124
127 1. Madame Hadjimichali: Ibid., p.

and on information furnished by the Services of the Hellenic State.

Thus, there is evidence that:

163 --The birth rate is very high among the Sarakatsani. Their families are very large, and the number of children that play around the
858 huts is considerable. "It is the children that make up true wealth,"
842 the Sarakatsani say; they also maintain that number of boys is of
562 greater importance to them than the number of girls. This statement is based on the fact that children of the female sex are not preferred and it is what they all believe, but it--is false. If it were true, the
[582] Sarakatsani would have difficulty marrying, since they practice endogamy; as a general rule they marry only Sarakatsani.

162 Now, there is no shortage of girls to marry in spite of information
[582] to the contrary furnished by B. Skafidas. (2)
[114] 2. Oi Sarakatsanaioi, p. 362.

[125] In taking a census of married women within the limits of two large
[178] Sarakatsani groups (at Tchoucalades very near Mt. Parnassus, and at Plaka near Lamia) who, significantly enough, were in the process of transition towards the sedentary life, we had occasion to /18/ confirm that non-Sarakatsani women represented a minute proportion (about 1.5%).

165 --Mortality is apparently low. It is the common belief among the Sarakatsani as well as among the peasants surrounding them that longevity is the rule among them.

This belief seems justified. The local health services of the Hellenic state, established in different localities visited by Sarakatsani, told us that mortality really is very low. Moreover, a visit to the Sarakatsani cemetery at Tchoucalades gave us the opportunity to ascertain that the average age of the deceased inscribed on the tombstones exceeded 70 years.
[217] Obviously, since there are no civil state registers among them (3) one may question whether these figures are very accurate.